

Westminster United Church

October 27th, 2024

✝ You are invited to stand as you are able

Announcements/Life and Work of the Church

✝ Passing the Peace of Christ

Land Acknowledgement

Today as we gather to worship let us remember that we worship God on the historic and unceded lands of Treaty 7 and neighbouring treaty 4. Traditional lands of the Metis, Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Stoney Nakoda and the T'suut'ina as well as the Cree and Ojibwa people. As Christ's people, let us be people of love, truth and reconciliation. May we live with respect on this land, and peace and friendship with its people.

Affirming Statement

"As a community church that gathers from many smaller communities in the Medicine Hat area, Westminster United Church publicly declares our commitment to creating a space where people are welcome, safe, and encouraged to participate in the life of the church inclusive of: Sexual orientation, gender identity, two spirited people, differing abilities, age, ethnic background, race, marital status, or economic circumstance.

Participation in the life of the church includes leadership, membership, sacraments, marriage, and celebrating milestones of life's journey.

We celebrate the richness of diversity, and we commit ourselves to openness, growth, education and to influencing the community for social justice.

In our dedication to living our God's word and with God's help, we devote ourselves to proactive learning and inclusion."

✠Introit: “Come Let Us Sing” (VU 222 vs.4)

✠Call to Worship

L: In the midst of darkness, there is light.

P: In the midst of blindness, we will be given sight.

L: Our Savior, Jesus Christ, brings healing love to us.

P: Let the light of Jesus’ love, breakthrough our blindness and fill our world with glory.

L: Tear away the bonds that trap us in darkness, Lord.

P: Wipe away all our fears so that we may boldly proclaim your Love.

L: Give us courage to stand for truth and justice.

P: Give us wisdom to reach out in compassion to others.

L: Transform our lives.

P: Reform our souls.

L: Bring us to a new day in your kingdom, O Lord.

P: Bring us to a new way of serving you with great joy, O Lord.

✠Procession of Christ Candle

Long, long ago before there was anything, before there was a world, before there was light, before there was darkness, there was God: Creator and Source of Life. God moved and God breathed the world into being, and God said “Let there be light.” Not quite so long but still very long ago, One was born who embodied the light of the Creator. We present this candle to remind ourselves and to celebrate Christ’s constant presence. May we always seek His guiding light in our lives, as we are called to carry that light into the world.

Lighting of the Rainbow Candle

Jesus taught us to love one another in a way that sparked a movement and a new understanding of God. We light this rainbow candle as a visible reminder of the radical inclusivity shown to us by Jesus, who calls us to follow him.

Lighting of Peace Candle

“We light the candle of Peace to remind ourselves that Christ is the Prince of Peace. We pray for peace for ourselves and for the world.”

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✠ Opening Prayer

Open our eyes, Lord. Help us to see Jesus as he reaches out to heal our blindness. Help us to let go of all those things that keep us in darkness. This day, as your word is proclaimed, let our hearts and souls respond with joy. Transform our lives to do your will. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

✠ Opening Hymn: "O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" (VU 326)

Prayer of Confession

We think that we want to be healed of our blindness, gracious God, but actually we have become so comfortable in our darkness that we fear the light. It is as though we are living in a cave, and rather than take a risk to face the light, we prefer to face the dark wall. Give us courage to take risks which will result in not only our own transformation, but also the transformation opportunities for others. Forgive our stubborn insistence on living in darkness. Take our hands and lead us to the light. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

Turn and see the light of God's love. It is lavished upon you. You have been healed and made whole in God's love. Be at peace and rejoice!

Prayers of the People

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Gracious and Caring God, we long for your word. We yearn for the messages you provide in your scripture. We ask that you fill our minds and souls with that for which we wait as we hear the scriptures today. Amen

SCRIPTURE READINGS (Read by Marilyn Taylor)

Psalm 34:VU pp.761

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of our God

I will bless God at all times,
God's praise will continually be in my mouth.

My soul will glory in God, the humble will hear and be glad.

O magnify God with me, let us exalt God's name together.

**I sought God, who answered me,
and freed me from all my fears.**

Look to the Most High, and let your light shine,
and your faces will not be ashamed.

**This poor soul cried out and God heard,
and saved me from all my troubles. R**

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of our God

Your angel, O God, keeps guard over those who fear you
and delivers them.

**Taste and see that our God is good.
Happy are those who take refuge in God.**

for those who fear God lack nothing.

**Strong lions suffer want and go hungry,
but those who seek God lack no good thing. R**

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of our God

Come, my children, and listen to me,

I will teach you the fear of God.

**Which of you delights in life,
and desires many days to enjoy prosperity?**

Keep your tongue from evil, your lips from speaking lies.

Turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.

**God's eyes are upon the righteous,
God's ears open to their cry.**

God's face is set against evil-doers,

to blot out their remembrance from the earth.

**The righteous cry out and God hears them,
and rescues them from all their troubles.**

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of our God

God is near to the broken-hearted,

and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

**Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but God sets them free from every sorrow.**

God guards every bone in their body;

not one of them will be broken.

**Evil brings death to the wicked;
those who hate the righteous will be condemned.**

But you, God, redeem the life of your servants;

none who take refuge in you are condemned. R

Taste and see, taste and see the goodness of our God

One: This is the witness of the ancient song-writers.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Anthem: "The Least of These"

Hebrews 7:23- 28

²³ Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. ²⁵ Consequently he is able for all time to save^[a] those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other^[b] high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever.

One: This is the witness of the Church.

All: Thanks be to God for the Word.

Mark 10:46-52

The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁸ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁹ Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.' ⁵⁰ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me

to do for you?’ The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher,^[a] let me see again.’⁵² Jesus said to him, ‘Go; your faith has made you well.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

One: This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

All: Praise to Christ, the Living Christ.

Sermon:

✝HYMN: “Prayer is the Soul’s Sincere Desire” (Lyrics on PP)

Minutes for Mission “Hope and Transformation” (Read by Debi Hoefling)

In a part of El Salvador where the climate is harsh and mining projects have impacted the environment, the Association of Economic and Social Development Santa Marta (ADES) is making a remarkable difference. Partnered with Mission and Service, ADES has launched a transformative agroecology project, bringing hope to rural farmers.

This initiative is centred at the Dora Alicia Sorto School Farm. Here, rural families—primarily led by women—learn sustainable farming practices that recycle nutrients into the soil, protect biodiversity, and reduce production costs.

Thanks to your generous gifts, this project can equip farmers with training, technical expertise, and native seeds, all while promoting environmental stewardship and gender equality. In a region affected by increasing droughts and disrupted agricultural patterns, these new methods help farmers adapt and thrive.

Your support has the power to extend to communities facing severe challenges. By contributing to this project, you are not just providing food; you are also empowering families to grow more, sustain their land, and secure their futures.

Thank you for supporting projects like this through [Mission and Service](#). Your gift ensures that others can look forward to a future where their tables are full.

Invitation to the Offering

Lord God you give us bountiful gifts and now we wish to return a portion of that which we have received.

✠Doxology: (VU 538)

✠Offertory Prayer

Eternal and Loving God, our gifts are offered with thanksgiving. Your love has gifted us abundantly.

We pray that others will be blessed as we are with the power of the Spirit.

We ask that our gifts be allocated for blessings in the world. Amen

✠A NEW CREED (VU 918)

✠Closing Hymn: “How Firm a Foundation”(VU 660)

✠BENEDICTION/COMMISSIONING

You have been called to serve the Lord with gladness. Go from this place knowing that God’s blessings have been poured on you so that you may be a blessing to others. Be at peace and bring the good news of God’s love and peace to all whom you meet. AMEN.

✠CHORAL AMEN (VU 971)

✠SENDING FORTH HYMN: (VU 224 vs 1) “Sing a Happy Hallelujah”

POSTLUDE:

